

THE *Buckeye*

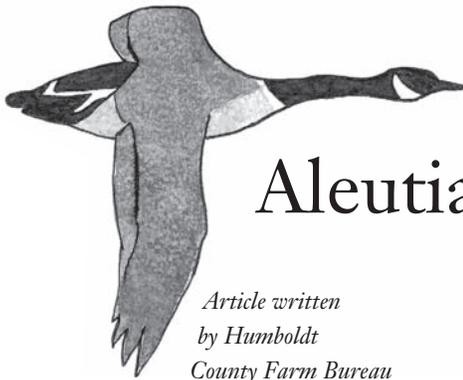
PRESERVING OPEN SPACE THROUGH FAMILY STEWARDSHIP OF
NATURAL RESOURCES IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CA

CONSERVATOR

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The Newsletter of The Buckeye Conservancy



*Article written
by Humboldt
County Farm Bureau*

LIVING WITH *Aleutian Geese in Humboldt County*

After 30 years of remedial actions by Federal and State wildlife agencies, the once endangered Aleutian goose population is thriving on the Pacific North Coast. From a low of about 800 geese in 1975, today over 100,000 of the geese stop in Humboldt and Del Norte counties to prepare for their incredible transoceanic migration on to nesting grounds in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska. However, since these vegetarian geese are incredible grazers that seek out the greenest of pastures, a major conflict has emerged on the North Coast.

During their northward migration, the geese pause between January and April and eat tender spring plant growth that the dairy and beef cattle producers rely on to feed their stock. Some landowners have lost up to fifty percent of their annual grass production to Aleutian geese during this period.

As a result, ranchers that accommodate the geese have to reduce herd size or

provide supplemental feed. Families who operate one of our region's prized economic industries are losing substantial income.

The Aleutian Goose Working Group has been formed to help reduce the impact from the geese on landowners. This group is comprised of concerned citizens from Northern California and Southern Oregon. Some of the members include: Blake Alexander from Crescent City, Jay Russ and Hugo Klopper from Ferndale, Dean Hunt and Peter Bussman from Arcata and Katherine Ziemer from Eureka as well as State and Federal Agency personnel. The group has identified goals to encourage the enhancement of Aleutian goose habitat on Public Lands, implement well placed hazing and hunting programs that will shift geese into goose-safe areas, continue outreach to inform the community about the scope of goose-agricultural issues and initiatives. A key goal is to assist the Pacific Flyway Council in its objective to maintain the population of Aleutian geese at 60,000 birds measured by a 3 year average of indirect estimates obtained in the spring.

Recently, local agencies, non-profits and elected officials, lobbied the California Fish and Game Commission to petition the Pacific Flyway Council to allow for an extended spring hunting season for the Aleutian geese in 2007 on the north coast. This request was granted and in 2007 the Aleutian goose hunting season will be extended 10 days after the normal hunting season. The extended season would benefit landowners by allowing sportsmen to hunt and haze the geese off their property and fly to Public Lands. Many local ranchers who are affected by the Aleutian geese have signed-up to participate in the SHARE program with California Department of Fish & Game. This program will provide the necessary land from private landowners for hunting. Public Lands will not allow hunting, but will give the geese a "Safe" place to land. This season will begin on February 28th and go through March 10th.

The Aleutian Goose Working Group will continue to meet monthly to address issues, and find relief for landowners who are experiencing the loss of grazing land due to the overpopulation of these geese.

DUPLICATIVE TIMBER HARVEST PERMITS & THEIR COST

What's Wrong With This Picture?

Following is a brief summary of the timber harvest permit duplications that have and are occurring on the North Coast of California under the current administration.

In existence at the time that this administration came into office was a very "comprehensive" and detailed CEQA compliant Timber Harvest Plan permit.

In 1985, the average THP was composed of approximately 8-10 pages and attached maps. Actual operations on the ground today are not significantly different than they were in 1985. The THP required in 2006, is hundreds of pages and may double after extensive review by a multitude of agencies. The time required to process this multitude of documentations usually stretches well beyond the State mandated 60 days into over one hundred days or more (up to one year or more). It is worth noting that the State of Oregon has a harvest permit that is less than 5 pages and is ready for operations in approximately 2 weeks. The "on the ground" implementation is similar in both states with perhaps Oregon having a better record in terms of endangered species, Coho especially.

In late 2004, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) created a separate and new Water Quality Waste Discharge permit (GWDR) including an erosion control plan (ECP). This is a separate permit, independent of the above-mentioned Timber Harvest Plan and is regulated by another agency (NCRWQCB). Prior to 2004, timber harvesting had come under a waiver through the Regional Water Boards and functioned quite well for many years. It had been recognized that the Timber Harvest Plan permit more than adequately addressed water quality issues through a number of multi-disciplinary

regulatory processes. Ironically most if not all the features in this new permit are already included in the Timber Harvest Plan. In fact when the North Coast Water Quality Control Board's executive director appeared before the Board of Forestry, she admitted that this was somewhat of a duplication of what was actually being done, but this extra permit would "codify" the process.

In 2005 the California Department of Fish and Game 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement process was greatly expanded. This is a hold over from many years ago before CEQA and the 1973 (current) Forest Practice Rules and permit. This permit was required before "significant" watercourses (USGS mapped blue line streams) had culverts or crossings installed in them and consisted of a 2-3-page document. This currently is a duplication of the process that the Timber Harvest Plan goes through with its multi-agency CEQA multidisciplinary review including DFG, CDF, Water Quality, California Geological Service agencies to name a few. DFG currently requires the THP be approved before issuing the 1600 permit. Prior to 2005 an effort to "combine" the processes was made. However, for whatever reason, the 1600 process has now become its own independent permit process with significantly expanded fees paid to DFG. It covers all watercourses no matter how insignificant or "dry". The newest 1600 permit is a nine-page document with an addendum for timber harvesting.

In 2006 the administration proposed that a 4th permit be avoided by combining the "Draft 2112 ITP Guidelines for Timber Operations" into the California Forest Practice rules. If one reads this DFG 2112 Draft it has all the earmarks of still another separate permit that mirrors already existing rules and regulations and gives at minimum equal lead agency status to DFG. DFG has been a primary participant and contributor in all the numerous watercourse and lake protection rules (14 CCR 916.5) and Threatened and Impaired Rules (14 CCR 916.) that have been in existence for the past 33 years of the existence of the Forest Practice Rules. In fact (DFG 2112 ITP) even has a potential conflict with the new duplicative water quality permit. Who's going to be "top hog at the trough"?

Currently proposed before the Board of Forestry is a redundant and duplicative Roads Management Plan that will mirror the existing parts of the THP, the 2004 Regional Water Quality GWDR and ECP and the proposed DFG 2112 Coho salmon rules.

Except for the timber harvest permit all the other permits or proposed permits have rather substantial fees. The fees and the permit implementation cost are a significant disincentive to conservative forest management and "open space" retention by private landowners. In short a lot of unnecessary logging is going to be required to pay for a lot of redundant and duplicative regulatory requirements that do not appear to be "anything new".

"No issue has lasted longer with fewer results than the various attempts to ease the bureaucratic burdens for timber operators working on small parcels".
(The California Forest Practice Program, State of California 1989)

BUCKEYE FOREST

Project Update

Building a Voice at the Statewide Level

The Buckeye Forest Project has identified two primary solutions to allow forest and range landowners to continue to steward their lands for both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability that are critical to the quality of life and the protection of open space in Humboldt County. The two solutions are expanding the time limit for Timber Harvest Plans and expanding acreage limits for Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans. The BFP needs to build a voice at the statewide level to implement the changes here on the ground in Humboldt County.

During the past year, The Buckeye Conservancy was successful in introducing legislation sponsored by Senator Wesley Chesbro to extend Timber Harvest Permits from 3 years to 5 years. The bill was SB 1342. SB 1342 passed both the Assembly and Senate Natural Resources Committees and was headed to the Governor's desk. Unfortunately, the proposal ran into some roadblocks because the necessary "Buckeye-style" consensus was not developed at the statewide level and thus was reluctantly pulled. Although the legislation ultimately failed, it is important to note that Buckeye succeeded in moving SB1342 through the legislative process much further than any other similar THP bills in recent years.

From the experience of early 2006, it is clear there are at least four arenas where BFP needs to focus its efforts to develop statewide support for realistic legislative changes.

1. Reaching out to other foresters around the state. Several RPFs have participated in the project from the beginning. However, management styles are different and location impacts this greatly. What might work well for nonindustrial forestry in Humboldt County may have unintended consequences for similar forest landowners in other parts of the state.
2. Defining our terms. The term "all-age forest management" was used in the recent NTMP legislation. It has since been discovered that this term means different things to different people and in different parts of the state. Agreement must be reached on a set of definitions for the terms that will be used to define the stewardship forestry practices that BFP will promote statewide.
3. Examining different rule packages for different regions. The Forest Practice Rules are organized into three different regions, with some areas having a different set of local rules. Santa Cruz County is one such area. The THP legislation hit snags in receiving environmental community support because it was perceived there was no incentive for landowners in Santa Cruz County. These rule packages need to be better understood and addressed to ensure any legislation benefits nonindustrial landowners practicing stewardship forestry statewide.
4. Defining acreage limits for NTMP expansion. The current limit is 2500 acres. There are many ideas circulating regarding the magic number to which NTMPs should be expanded. The environmental community is nervous about making this expansion too big too fast because of agency monitoring and enforcement staffing realities. A recent proposal was for 10,000 acres. However, there are several ranches in Humboldt County that are larger than this.

Buckeye Conservancy is grateful for all the volunteers who have and continue to dedicate their time and expertise to this project; and to all the individuals, businesses and funders who have supported the project financially. Buckeye Forest Project is continuing to work on these very complex issues. It is a daunting task, but any improvement made to the current system will be well worth the effort.



Pictured L to R – Sally French, Ken Moore, Mike Atkins, Tracy Katelman, Senator Wesley Chesbro, Nancy Reichard, Jim Able, Bob Stansberry, Richard Gienger.

2006 Buckeye Stewardship Award Recipients

DPete and Mary Ann Bansen, owners of Bancrest Dairy in Ferndale, were the recipients of the 2006 Buckeye Conservancy Stewardship Award. Presented at The Buckeye's Annual Meeting held in March, this award recognizes people who demonstrate excellent care and management of natural resources while balancing the ecological health of the region's wildlands, a healthy stable economy and preserving open space in family ownership. In the dairy business since 1977, Pete and Mary are proud to be the third generation of Bansens to dairy in Ferndale.



*2006 Buckeye Stewardship Award Recipients,
Pete and Mary Ann Bansen, owners of
Bancrest Dairy in Ferndale*

The Bansens' vision is to carry on the family tradition and provide for future generations. Care about the environment is demonstrated in many ways at the Bancrest Dairy. The Bansens were one of the first ten dairies in California to be certified under a voluntary agreement or partnership between California

Dairy Industry, University of California Cooperative Extension and regulatory agencies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency. This CDQAP (California Dairy Quality Assurance Program) Environmental Stewardship Partnership agreement helps dairy farms meet or exceed local, state and federal

regulation requirements by utilizing environmentally sound practices. Two examples of ecologically sound practices are installation of gutters to capture and maintain clean water and creation of a new manure system to provide proper distribution and storage. A new milk barn has recently been completed which is both energy and water efficient. It is also cow comfort oriented, making sure cows are in and out as quickly as possible.

Bancrest Dairy takes great pride in giving farm tours as a means of educating the public about the dairy industry. The dairy is wheel chair accessible. Approximately 1,200 visitors annually, ranging from local youth to tourists from 46 different countries, visit Bancrest. Also, many foreign exchange students have been hosted by Pete and Mary Ann over the years. The Bansens have also been the host of the National Jersey Convention.

The Bansens' continual investment of capital and utilization of new technologies ensures the success of the Bancrest Dairy. Congratulations!

Get Ready for the 7th Annual Buckeye Meeting & Dinner

Buckeye Conservancy family and friends will gather for the Seventh Annual Meeting on March 10 at River Lodge in Fortuna. It promises to be a fun filled evening. Immediately following the business meeting, Buckeye is hosting the bar during the Social Hour. Next on the schedule is the famous Pete Bussman New York steak barbecue with all the fixings catered by CC Market.

There will be a Live Auction during the dinner hour with many unique items for you to bid on. Rex Bohn, auctioneer extraordinaire, guarantees a lively affair. Money from the auction is used to

help Buckeye continue its vigilance on behalf of landowners.

We are pleased to present Robert Tse as the keynote speaker. Robert is Director of Trade for California Department of Food and Agriculture. As Director, he is responsible for advising the Secretary of Agriculture on international trade issues affecting California, including international trade policy and export market development. He organizes the agriculture program for the Governor's trade missions, which have included Mexico and China. Robert has written numerous articles and spoken at international and national

conferences on global demand for high value consumer food products. Robert will share his knowledge regarding the relationship of the global market on California's food and agriculture. There will be a brief question/answer time after his presentation for audience participation.

Members and non-members are welcome to attend. The cost is \$75.00 per person. Once again we hope you will join us for a fun and memorable evening. Please call the Buckeye office for more information – 786-9662.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Environment & How It's Perceived

By Sterling McWhorter, *Mattole Rancher*

My wife Cindy, and I, along with our children, Morgan and Quinton, operate the McWhorter Family Partnership, a ranch in Petrolia, CA we own with seven other siblings. It is a job we are thankful for everyday, and one in which we take great pride. We have ties to the land and family roots here.

Recently one of my brother in-laws sent me an article out of *The Wall Street Journal* which discussed the latest trend of the rich and famous, such as movie star Val Kilmer, in which they began buying large and small ranches in Colorado, Idaho and Montana. It began as a way for them to have "a place to get away from it all." After many of these "want to be Cowboys" spent millions of dollars fixing up their spreads, they have decided to sell them. The reasons stated ranged from slow mail service, too far for friends to visit, too expensive to maintain and, of course, to cash out on the appreciation of the property. All valid reasons, don't you think?

The real reason that comes to my mind is that these people have no ties to the land. Their grandparents did not live on or work the land generations before them. The skills needed to mend and care for such operations were not passed down as a necessity. Yes, the mail is slow, friends rarely visit, finances are tight at times and land values are high. So what, we have roots here! For most ranching families I know, selling out will come from government pressure, not greed or inconvenience.

I once heard Dan Walters, a political analyst, talk about public perception concerning agriculture in the United

States. He stated that this perception is and would continue to be the tallest hurdle natural resource producers will face. It is this negative perception that is driving public policy, legislation and ultimately regulation. It is beginning to choke out the generational root system many family farms and ranches depend on. What is the negative public perception, and how do we change it?

The perception I speak of concerns the natural environment and its perceived health. Many people strongly believe that the environment is in bad shape and requires strict governmental intervention to save it. Let's call them group A. Members of Group A would like to see greater governmental open space acquisition and increased cluster type communities; meaning, the relocation of people off the land and into cities. Group B cares just as much about the environment, but contends the natural health of the environment is improving. It also believes governmental regulation has gone much too far, and is actually hampering continued improvement of the environment. Group B also contends private ownership of open space is more productive for both society and the economy. With the exception of public access, it provides the same benefits as government ownership. Well, who's right?

Let's examine Humboldt County in an attempt to answer this question. We all live here for different reasons. A common reason, I believe, would be the beauty of Humboldt County. This natural beauty encompasses the redwood and fir forests, the many rivers, the ocean and lagoons, the green pastures, the clean crisp air and

of course, the fish and wild animals. What do you see when you travel around this area? Do you feel lucky to be here, or are you dying to leave because of the natural destruction taking place around you?

Here's what I see! As I go about my day on my family's ranch in the Mattole, I see strength and agility as Mother Nature abounds. Strengthening salmon and steelhead runs returning to spawn, young fir and hardwood forests ready to be thinned before they are engulfed in wild fire, trophy black tail deer, turtles, golden eagles, an occasional bald eagle, ducks, black bears, badgers, and squirrels, just to name a few critters. Oh yes, let's not forget the cows, horses, dogs and the eight brothers and sisters and husbands and wives holding it together through this generation for the next generations to experience. The same is true all over this nation. Are there problems out there? Yes there are, but few and far between.

In closing, I would like to suggest we halt the current regulatory frenzy that is perceived as necessary to restrict resource management. The proof is in our surroundings, the big picture, not some biased political fear campaign about how the land is being raped for profits.



MATTOLE FOREST Futures Project

Over the last two decades, forestry regulations have greatly increased the cost of a timber harvest permit — a trend that has been especially hard on forestland owners who prefer to log with a lighter touch. As the Buckeye Forest Project demonstrated, the cost of permitting has made light harvests less feasible, creating economic pressures to either subdivide large land holdings or leave the forest unmanaged, thereby allowing a hazardous build-up of fuels.

The Mattole Restoration Council has received funding for their Mattole Forest Futures project whose objective is to simplify logging permits for light-touch forestry in the Mattole watershed. The Buckeye Conservancy will be actively involved in the project. The first step is to analyze local forest conditions in a “Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report.” A PTEIR takes care of the most complex kinds of environmental review that individual projects normally face, such as wildlife studies and cumulative effects, saving landowners from having to repeat the same review in their logging plans. The PTEIR will analyze the environmental effects of several light-touch forestry practices in the Mattole. Landowners who follow those practices will be able to file simplified Program Timber Harvest Plans—a kind of “EZ form” for forestry. One forester who has prepared these plans estimates that a PTHP costs 50 to 75 percent less than a regular THP, equating to significant savings to landowners.

The MRC will start this winter by convening neighborhood meetings and a scientific advisory committee to gather the best local and technical knowledge about the state of the watershed. A steering committee — including a representative of the Buckeye Conservancy, as well as local landowners, forestry practitioners and non-profits, and environmental activists — will guide the process at key steps along the way. Look for updates in future newsletters.

Camp Run

After a one year leave of absence, Andy Westfall has returned to Buckeye’s Board of Directors to fill the vacancy left by John Rice’s retirement. As a founding member of Buckeye, we are very pleased to have Andy back in the saddle.

Board member Sterling McWhorter has stepped down from the Board of Directors short of his full term and has been replaced by Gary Green, Humboldt Creamery Human Resource Specialist/Safety Manager. Welcome Gary! We thank both John and Sterling for all their hard work while on the Board.

Dues Reminder – 2007 Buckeye dues notices have been mailed and many members have renewed. Thank you for your promptness. If you haven’t already mailed your dues in, please do so soon. We are always looking for new members so if you know of anyone who thinks like we do – the Buckeye way – extend an invitation to join. Have them give the office a call at 786-9662 and we’ll sign them up!

Speaking of membership, Buckeye has a new Commercial member – Humboldt Bay Forest Products. Owner Woody Murphy expressed his appreciation for the work Buckeye does on behalf of private timberland owners and looks forward to being part of the organization.

Gary Markegard, Buckeye member and long time familiar face in all things agriculture in Humboldt County, has retired after 30 years of service. Gary was Livestock and Natural Resource Advisor for the University of California Agricultural Extension. Gary was a leader in the agriculture community facilitating many local organizations and providing expert advice to producers. Buckeye wishes Gary a relaxing retirement, but we suspect we will continue to see him at local agriculture events.



HUMBOLDT COUNTY'S General Plan – A Call to Action

Humboldt County General Plan - Humboldt County is entering the final phase of the General Plan Update process conducting a series of public hearing workshops in the Board of Supervisors' Chamber, Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, California. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, February 15, 2007 at 6 PM. The second hearing is scheduled for March 15, 2007 - same

time and place. The Humboldt County General Plan addresses present and future land use and development criteria for the unincorporated portion of Humboldt County. The Humboldt County General Plan establishes the kinds, locations and intensities of land uses as well as applicable resource protection and development policies within the unincorporated areas of the County.

Any person may appear and present testimony in regard to this matter at the meeting. The Buckeye Conservancy continues to provide input and encourages individual members to attend the public hearing workshops as well. Buckeye's Board would appreciate any and all input from our membership in this very important matter.

THANKS
To You!

The Buckeye Conservancy has grown to be a well-known and credible voice for landowners promoting good stewardship and its public benefits throughout our area and beyond. Our members form the backbone of this organization. However, there are many who contribute additionally to help raise awareness of the pressures forcing families off the land and to help us seek proactive, common sense solutions to strengthen sustainability of these lands. Following is a list of folks who we would like to recognize for going the extra mile for *Buckeye*.

American Ag Credit
Anderson, Lucas, Somerville & Borges, Inc.
Mike Atkins
Buckeye Forest Project "team"
Rex Bohn
Cindy Borges
George & Luz Angela Brightman
Don Brown
Marion Brown
The Bungalow Group
Pete Bussman
The Carter House
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George & Peggy Schmidbauer
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Don & Andrea Tuttle
Yana Valachovic
Clint Victorine
Mock Wahlund
Andy & Sandy Westfall
Patricia Welch
Wyatt & Whitchurch, Inc.

BUCKEYE IS ONLINE

WWW.BUCKEYECONSERVANCY.ORG



Make sure you check out The Buckeye Conservancy's web page. We are at www.buckeyeconservancy.org

On the web page you will find everything from our "Mission," to membership information, past and current Buckeye newsletters, a photo gallery and more.

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